

REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action December 8, 2004, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18 and 21-23 remain pending in the application. Claims 7-11 and 23 have been deemed allowable over the art of record but have been objected to for depending on rejected base claims. Claims 1-4, 12-13, 17-18 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Mouri (U.S.P. 5,073,791, (previously of record)) in view of Kagami (U.S.P. 5,374,496). Claims 5 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Mouri in view Kagami and further in view of Ikenoue (U.S.P. 4,207,112). Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Mouri in view of Kagami and further in view of Yamada (previously of record). Claims 14-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Mouri in view of Kagami and further in view of Okino (previously of record).

To expedite prosecution of the case, Applicant amends allowable claims 7-11 and 23 independent form and adds new claims dependent on these allowable claims.

With regard to claim 17, this claim is also amended in independent form and is allowable over the art of record for the following reasons. The Examiner relies on the cutter 16 of Mouri as teaching the claimed cutter. However, the cutter of claim 17 is disposed after the optical fixing section, whereas the cutter of Mouri precedes any purported fixing section.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111  
U.S. Appln. No.: 09/845,322

With regard to the Examiner's statement on reasons for allowance, Applicant submits that the statements do not accurately reflect the recitations of the allowable subject matter. Accordingly, the claims should be deemed allowable based on their respective recitations.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that claims 7-11, 17 and 23-111 are in condition for allowance. Therefore it is respectfully requested that the subject application be passed to issue at the earliest possible time. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

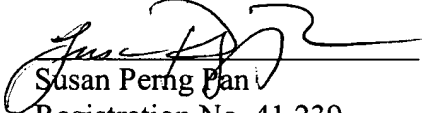
Respectfully submitted,

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WASHINGTON OFFICE

**23373**

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